



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

NEWS

ROD R. BLAGOJEVICH - GOVERNOR

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Governor Blagojevich announces statewide effort to teach drivers proper use of child safety seats

ISP steps up child passenger patrols, IDOT sponsors 33 safety seat checkpoints across the state to educate parents on proper safety seat use

SPRINGFIELD – Governor Rod R. Blagojevich announced today that the Illinois Department of Transportation (IDOT) and Illinois State Police (ISP) are teaming up to increase compliance with child safety seat laws and teach motorists about the proper use of child safety seats during the nationwide Child Passenger Safety Week, which runs from February 11-17.

The child safety campaign will include stepped up enforcement of the Illinois child passenger safety law by State Police and comes as the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) warns that motor vehicle crashes remain the number one killer of children aged 4 to 14 in America.

“We took an important step to protect young passengers when we toughened our child safety law a few years ago and required that every child traveling in a car up to eight years old sit in a car seat, instead of only up to age four,” said Gov. Blagojevich. “But the bottom line is safety seats only work if they are properly installed and the child is correctly buckled up. That’s why we directed the State Police and IDOT to mount an all out effort to enforce the law and educate the public about how to properly use a child safety seat.”

Illinois will kick off Child Passenger Safety Week February 11 by participating in the first annual *National Seat Check Sunday* with 33 safety seat inspection checkpoints hosted by IDOT’s Division of Traffic Safety, staffed with over 250 certified child passenger safety technicians (see below for the full list of locations). The goal is to educate new parents and the general public on proper installation of child safety seats.

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This latest safety effort comes soon after the Governor announced that according to preliminary figures there was a 7 percent drop in Illinois road fatalities last year. Altogether, there were 1,267 traffic deaths in 2006, which is the lowest recorded number of deaths on state roads since 1924. The dramatic reduction in fatalities is due in large part to the Governor's signing of the primary seat belt enforcement law, which allows police to pull over a driver simply for not wearing a seat belt.

"Ensuring the safety of our most precious cargo should be our priority every time we get behind the wheel of a car," said Acting IDOT Secretary Milt Sees. "So anytime you have a child in your car, whether it's your own child, a grandchild, a niece or nephew, I would urge you to take a few extra moments to make sure they are restrained properly. And if anyone has any doubts about whether they are using a child safety seat properly, now is the time to seek out a certified child safety seat technician."

"This year, during Child Passenger Safety Week, State Troopers will be working diligently to remind all parents, grandparents and child care providers that if their children are under age 8, they must be in a booster or child safety seat," said ISP Director Larry Trent. "Law enforcement officers across the state will keep a watchful eye out for those drivers who are violating the child safety seat law. The Illinois State Police currently has more than 80 nationally certified child passenger safety technicians and instructors on our force. We remain committed to enforcing this law in order to protect our state's children."

According to NHTSA, 98 percent of America's infants and 93 percent of children ages 1 to 3 are regularly restrained. However, only 10 to 20 percent of children ages 4 through 7 who should be using booster seats to protect them are actually in them. Children ages 4 to 8 who are placed in booster seats are 59 percent less likely to be injured in a car crash than children who are restrained only by a safety belt, according to a study by Children's Hospital of Philadelphia

Parents can also obtain information on child passenger safety at the Chicago Auto Show that runs February 9-18, and overlaps with Child Passenger Safety Week. Certified child passenger safety technicians from around the state and the Chicagoland area will staff a booth focused on proper child passenger safety at the Auto Show.

Gov. Blagojevich has made traffic safety a top priority for his administration and has actively supported legislation to reduce fatalities on our state's highways, including increased enforcement of seat belt use. Since 2003, safety belt usage has increased each year from 76 percent in 2003 to 88 percent in 2006.

Other traffic safety measures signed by the Governor include:

- A law that doubles the amount of time a teen must have behind the wheel before receiving their license;
- A law that bans teen drivers from carrying more than one passenger for the first six months after receiving his or her license;
- A law that bans cell phone use while driving by those under 18;
- Requiring drivers under 18 to make sure that their teen passengers are buckled properly in the front and back seats;

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- Increased penalties for drivers over the age of 21 who transport a child under the age of 16 while impaired;
- Chemical testing required for those arrested for hit-and-run;
- Harsher sentencing for causing a death while driving impaired;
- Tougher penalties for driving on a DUI-revoked license; and
- A law that allows for expanded use of DUI funds by local agencies.

For more information about *National Seat Check Sunday*, Child Passenger Safety Week and the proper use of booster seats, please visit www.buckleupillinois.org, www.BoosterSeat.gov, or www.SaferCar.gov.

National Seat Check Sunday events will be held in the following cities across Illinois:

| Location | Address | City/State/Zip | Time | Lead Technician |
|---|---------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| The Hope Center | 23 W. Cherry | Albion, IL 62806 | 1:00-3:00 | Steve Smith (618) 445-2065 |
| Benld United Methodist Church | 209 S. Main St. | Benld, IL 62009 | 1:00-3:00 | Debbie Link (217) 854-3223 x225 |
| Rice Motors | 1306 W. Main St. | Carmi, IL 62821 | 1:00-4:00 | Kathy White (618) 847-5611 |
| State Farm Investigation Site | 2633 W. Addison | Chicago, IL 60618 | 12:00-2:00 on Feb. 10 th | Ashley Gold (773) 880-3095 |
| UIC Police Department Motor Pool Bays 1 & 2 | 1351 S. Morgan | Chicago, IL 60607 | 1:00-3:00 | Alex Errum (312) 746-8306 |
| 010 District Lot (West) | 3315 W. Ogden | Chicago, IL 60623 | 10:00-12:00 | George Perez (312) 747-7190 |
| IDOT garage | 3501 W. Normal | Chicago, IL 60609 | 10:00-1:00 | Clare Pfothner (847) 294-4522 |
| Walgreens | 4225 W. Armitage | Chicago, IL 60639 | 1:00-3:00 | Wanda Vazquez (773) 252-9098 x109 |
| Target | 2901 S. Cicero Ave. | Cicero, IL 60804 | 10:00-2:00 | Rhonda Gross (708) 652-2130 |
| Danville Fire Station #3 | 1111 N. Griffin St. | Danville, IL 61832 | 1:00-4:00 | Sandy Heffern (217) 431-2662 |
| Decatur Fire Station #1 | 1415 N. Water | Decatur, IL 62526 | 11:00-3:00 | Michelle Henkelman (217) 425-1500 x1313 |
| Ken Nelson Auto Plaza | 1000 N. Galena Ave. | Dixon, IL 61021 | 11:00-3:00 | Nicholas Albert (815) 288-7451 |
| East Peoria Kohls | 401 N. Main St. | East Peoria, IL 61611 | 2:00-4:00 | Patrick Collier (309) 671-4602 |

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| Stephenson County Health Department | 10 W. Linden | Freeport, IL 61032 | 12:00-3:00 | Jamie Engel (815) 235-8392 |
| Gurnee Police Department | 100 N. O'Plaine Rd. | Gurnee, IL 60031 | 10:00-2:00 | Wendy Mann (847) 599-7000 |
| Highland Firehouse #1 | 1122 Broadway | Highland, IL 62249 | 1:00-3:00 | Aric Steinbeck (618) 654-2131 |
| Kankakee County Sheriff's Police | 3000 S. Justice Way | Kankakee, IL 60901 | 10:00-2:00 | Darrel Smith (815) 802-7144 |
| Macomb Fire Department | 219 W. Jackson | Macomb, IL 61455 | 12:00-3:00 | Greg Waller (309) 836-7800 |
| Marion Ford | 1910 W. Coolidge Ave. | Marion, IL 62959 | 1:00-3:00 | Rachel Walker (618) 453-1359 |
| Mills Chevrolet | 1610 39 th Ave. | Moline, IL 61265 | 11:00-2:00 | Keene Hart (309) 792-4890 |
| Monmouth Fire Department | 1100 S. Main St. | Monmouth, IL 61462 | 10:00-4:00 | Ed Howard (309) 833-4046 x236 |
| Jefferson County Health Department | #1 Doctors Park Rd. Suite F | Mt. Vernon, IL 62864 | 12:00-2:00 | Judy McLaughlin (618) 244-7134 |
| Rebbec Motors | 302 Landmark Dr. | Normal, IL 61761 | 1:00-4:00 | Jennifer Toney (309) 828-1892 |
| Auffenberg Dealer Group | 106 Auto Court | O'Fallon, IL 62269 | 1:00-3:00 | Melissa Churchman (618) 877-6780 |
| Plainfield Fire Station #1 | 15025 DesPlaines | Plainfield, IL 60544 | 11:00-2:00 | Kelly Rogina (815) 436-5335 |
| Central Fire Station | 906 Vermont | Quincy, IL 62301 | 11:00-2:00 | Jan Hummel (217) 222-8440 x119 |
| Rogers in Rantoul | 101 E. Congress | Rantoul, IL 61866 | 12:00-4:00 | Susan Butler (217) 531-4268 |
| Saturn of Rockford | 343 N. Perryville Rd. | Rockford, IL 61107 | 10:00-2:00 on Feb. 10 th | Melanie Wingo (815) 720-4345 |
| Friendly Chevrolet | 2540 Prairie Crossing Dr. | Springfield, IL 62711 | 12:00-2:00 | Lib Granzeau (217) 558-0568 |
| Zimmerman Ford | 2525 E. Main St. | St. Charles, IL 60174 | 11:00-2:00 | Jeff Finley (630) 443-3730 |
| Douglas County Highway Department | 200 S. Prairie | Tuscola, IL 61953 | 11:00-2:00 | April Kauffman (217) 253-4137 |
| Monroe County Ambulance | 901 Illinois Ave. | Waterloo, IL 62298 | 12:00-2:00 | Carla Heise (618) 939-6175 |
| Wheeling Municipal Complex | 255 W. Dundee Rd. | Wheeling, IL 60090 | 12:00-3:00 | Michael Rompala (847) 459-2632 |